

OLYMPIC GAMES GOOD FOR BUSINESS BAD FOR PEOPLE

12,000 POLICE OFFICERS. 13,500 MILITARY PERSONNEL. 20,000 SECURITY GUARDS.
1,000 U.S. SECURITY PERSONNEL. 300 M15 AGENTS. WARSHIPS. DRONES. SNIPERS.



LONDON OLYMPIGS 2012. ENJOY THE GAMES!

The Olympics are not about sport - they're about making money.

It's ridiculous that local sports facilities are bulldozed to make way for the Games. The money would have been better spent saving the playing fields of local schools around London rather than on concrete buildings most of us will never be allowed to use.

Our money is subsidising big corporations and property developers. Initially, Labour minister Tessa Jowell promised the Games would cost no more than £2.375 billion. So far, the costs have risen to over £10 billion. Yet only 2% has come from the private sector; 98% is from public funds.

The corporate 'sponsors' of the Games get cheap advertising on millions of TVs, and free labour from local unpaid volunteers. Several of the companies have dodgy connections: Dow Chemicals manufactured napalm and agent orange, and is ducking its responsibilities in Bhopal; Atos Origin do the infamous Work Capability Assessments cutting off people on Incapacity Benefit; Adidas pays its workers in Bangladesh less than the minimum wage of 12p an hour!

Good for small businesses? Maybe for a few weeks, but the massive Westfield centre will kill off many of the smaller local businesses. Over 300 businesses have already been removed from the Olympic sites, along with 1,200 homes.

You can watch the Games at a distance on TV, but try to get near and you'll be stopped and searched - by 40,000 troops, police and private security. Laws are in place making it illegal to display anything that might jeopardise commercial interests. In the last few weeks the police have distributed leaflets warning of terrorism. These scare tactics

will justify repressive legislation and future police actions.

It will be impossible to find housing during July and August. Landlords are raising rents, and kicking tenants out during the Olympics, so they can rake in rents from visitors. Tenants have been evicted from the top five floors of one housing block so that media companies can use it during the Games.

Transport will be a nightmare. But rather than try to make improvements, road lanes will be barred to ordinary traffic - even to ambulances - so that rich visitors can have an easy ride.

Regeneration or Gentrification?

And after the Games? Already 1439 homes of the Athletes Village have been sold to a Qatar investment company for £557 million, losing taxpayers £275 million. There are plans to knock down Carpenter's Road Estate nearby and build more yuppie housing.

Claims of leaving a 'green' legacy in the Olympic Park are rubbish. The felled mature trees and habitat will not be restored, but replaced by manicured lawns, some of which will be fenced off for those who can afford the luxury housing.

There's a perfectly good site in Greece, where a cash-strapped government is paying millions to guard buildings left empty after the Olympics there. In 1945, homeless people in the UK squatted disused army camps. Maybe the Olympic site will be put to better use than a playground for the rich.

The Olympic torch might spark a summer of discontent.

For more info see www.gamesmonitor.org.uk

COME ON YOU SPURS DO THE RIGHT THING

On the 13th February, Haringey Council agreed to planning consent for the redevelopment of the new Spurs ground and surrounding area; but not without some controversial amendments to the plans.

First of all, the housing allocation has risen from 200 units, to 285. Excellent, the borough desperately needs more homes. However, the 100 apartments that were originally earmarked as 'affordable' housing, are now deemed financially unviable, contrary to council policy to push for 50% affordable housing in all new developments.

The council admit there is a 'major need' for affordable housing in the borough, but are clearly prepared to tear up their policies when it suits developers. But what about those desperately in need of somewhere to live in Haringey?

Secondly, the £1.2 million education pledge has been axed. The reason for this is that most of the new housing is to be made up of one and two bedroom flats,

so fewer children will live there, reducing the impact on local schools. How do they know this? After all, the final plans have not yet been submitted.

Spurs, as all football clubs do, spout on about what they do for the local community. Well here is a wonderful opportunity going to waste. As for the council's handling of the matter, it is a case of business as usual, and those most in need can rot.

At the other end of Tottenham, the local community are showing the way by creating their own plan for the Seven Sisters area. The Wards Corner coalition has shown that, with collective resistance, local people can change decision-making, rather than it being dictated by developers who are only interested in their profit margins.

"Affordable' here, does not mean for those most in need, or what most of us would call affordable."

URBAN HARVEST

So, I fancy some winter salad. Do I...

- buy imported, chlorine-dipped leaves from a global corporation?
- buy organically grown but expensive leaves from my local independent retailer?
- build a greenhouse and nurture seedlings through the dark months?
- discover what's freely on offer for minimal effort?

There's an exciting resurgence of interest in food growing (see www.growinginharingey.org.uk) but we're still overlooking free food. Historically, people didn't need prompting to eat wild greens. Then somehow last century we lost this cultural heritage.

We worry about how Britain can feed itself, while chestnuts languish uneaten in parks and apples rot on compost heaps. Areas of abundance like

Tottenham marshes are lush with plums, horseradish and nettles. We eat imported Mediterranean greens and poison our own wild versions. Let's challenge this insanity!

Haringey's gardens are groaning with fruit that the owners can't or won't pick. Householders usually respond positively to a polite leaflet offering to help harvest their crop. Come and join us apple-picking in N10 this autumn. Even better, organise your own harvest, and coordinate it through your Residents' Association. Or check out parks and street trees.

More information:
www.urbanharvest.org.uk is a free, informal network. We explore free food on the third Saturday of every month.

Tweeting @UrbanHarvestUK

WHO WE ARE

HSG formed in 1991 out of the Anti-Poll Tax campaign and are a collection of Haringey residents from different backgrounds, experiences and views. What we have in common is a belief in the need to get rid of the current system which places profit and power before people's real needs. The only effective way to do this is for people to get organised, fight back and take over the decision-making in our communities and workplaces.

When we started we wanted to create something that would be long term and would be more than just a single issue. What we didn't want was yet another political party, putting its own priorities and ambitions first.

We support workers' disputes and campaigns against Council cuts, health cuts, and the loss of local community facilities. We are active on things around the environment,

housing and claimants' issues. We resist state controls and oppressive policing. Many of us are involved with local resident, community and other campaigning groups around the borough.

We think people need to take direct control of their community and workplace struggles: support each other and build up the skills and confidence to be able to run things for themselves; encourage practical solidarity between groups and individuals in struggle, and build strong, permanent grass roots networks.

We distribute thousands of copies of this free newsletter, hold regular open meetings and discussion evenings, and produce lots of leaflets, posters and booklets. The group is non-hierarchical. Our monthly meetings are open to anyone. We aim for consensus and everyone has a chance to say how they feel.

If you want to find out more about what we do visit www.haringey.org.uk, befriend us on facebook, twitter @hsg, or contact us at PO Box 2474, London, N8 or 0845 2235270 or info@haringey.org.uk

HARINGEY'S ONLY INDEPENDENT NEWS SHEET

TOTALLY INDYPENDENT

"First they ignore you. Then they laugh at you. Then they fight you. Then you win." - Mahatma Gandhi



WHOSE SCHOOL? OUR SCHOOL!

January 2012 saw one of the country's most inspiring demonstrations of local community resistance to the government's plans for education. Students, parents and teachers at Downhills Primary School in Tottenham took part in a 1,000-strong march from the school to the Civic Centre, in response to plans by Michael Gove, the Education Secretary. He wants the school, and three others in Haringey, to become an academy and be taken out of local government control.

Academies, introduced by the Blair administration, are sponsored by faith bodies, charities and privately run businesses and are effectively beyond any form of accountability - including the National Curriculum and parental involvement. The government has now seen fit to force these on to local primary schools when they are deemed to be failing - no matter the facts. The initial wave of academies were

aimed at secondary schools (in Haringey - Greig City) but Gove is now aiming to make all secondary schools into academies and has begun to also target primary schools. It is clear that he has made Haringey his testing ground for this policy.

There are many reasons to distrust his policy (see the Anti Academies Alliance website - www.antiacademies.org.uk). Those participating in January's demonstration are extremely distrustful of his motives and the logic behind his plans. Unfortunately Gove is determined to impose his political will and has dispensed with any notion of consultation at a local level - while still spouting his hypocrisy of "localism" and "parental choice". This will happen despite the resistance of students, teachers, governors, Haringey Council and even David Lammy.

In March, deciding he didn't like the Downhills

governors opposing his plans, Gove sacked them all, and replaced them with governors chosen by him. This included two people from the company he wants to privately run the school. So next time you hear a Tory talking about taking power from central government and giving it back to the people - just remember Downhills school.

Nevertheless, the campaign to save the school has achieved one of its main aims - to demonstrate that Gove's plans are extremely unpopular. We should reintroduce "the stocks" on West Green Common for people like Gove. For more info go to: www.hcaa.org.uk/

If you have any comments or thoughts about this newsletter email us at info@haringey.org.uk

DON'T BE A NO-WAGE SLAVE

We wrote about Boycott Workfare - and government workfare schemes - last summer. This is now a huge national campaign, with protest actions and media reports of people forced into unpaid work for private companies. Due to pressure from the campaigners a number of companies have stopped taking part in workfare schemes. Other are sitting on the fence, or suspended their involvement, hoping the fuss will die down.

A4E, a company with major workfare contracts with the Dept for Work and

Pensions, is being investigated for fraud. Its millionairess owner Emma Harrison had to resign. In 2010 four high paid employees were arrested for defrauding the government. Yet A4E were given further contracts. Would you employ someone who had ripped you off?

The government is panicked by the protests and have started name-calling. Chris Grayling, minister for Employment, has called Boycott Workfare "a front for the socialist workers party". Ian Duncan Smith thinks it is "a bunch of anarchists and

a few trade unions". But Boycott Workfare is a grassroots campaign with no party-political interests, run mainly by people on welfare, to fight for their rights. The gutter press are calling the protesters "a tiny band of left-wing radicals". Yet on March 3rd, this "tiny band" held protest actions in 25 cities across the UK.

Some unions have been extremely naive in supporting workfare. Although their members realize that workfare will reduce staff numbers and drive down wages, the union leadership only seem interested in supporting government propaganda. The new 'apprenticeship' and 'internship' schemes are little more than cheap labour. Recently the government announced lifting the age-limit to apprenticeships, so people over 50 can take part - but where are all the jobs? There are 5 million looking for

work and at most 500,000 paid jobs. At a time of high unemployment it makes no economic sense to provide free labour to private companies and public services (some councils and hospitals are using people on workfare). No sense unless you're a Tory wanting to cut wages and nostalgic for the days when there were servants who could be hired and fired at will.

Sickeningly, some charities actively support this forced labour. For example, the Salvation Army has a government contract for organizing workfare. Charities are becoming more strapped for cash, but there are lines they shouldn't cross.

To find out which organizations are still involved in workfare check out www.boycottworkfare.org

BLEAK HOUSE HARD TIMES

Cuts in housing benefit are already affecting the most vulnerable people in our communities. Unless there is significant opposition, over the coming months things will get a lot worse for millions of people as the benefit changes come into effect.

As we struggle with cuts, rising costs of fuel, food, fares and growing unemployment, those who rely on housing benefit are being forced to make serious decisions about where or how they live. The government claims reducing benefits will encourage landlords to reduce rents. This is utter nonsense. Private landlords have a captive market and can continue to push up rents, leaving those on benefits to either somehow make up the shortfall, move to a cheaper property or area, or stay and fight for a lower rent.

In London, research shows changes to housing benefit will reduce the areas of London where claimants can live. Many people now find themselves in a catch 22 situation. Either give up work and move to where the rents are affordable, or find cheaper, substandard or overcrowded accommodation to stay in the area they want.

There is a ridiculous scenario now in which the unemployed

in depressed northern regions are told to move south to look for work, whilst those in the south are told to move north in the search for affordable homes.

As repossession rates increase at an alarming rate, seven million people rely on credit cards and loans for mortgage payments as they desperately try to stave off eviction. In the last year about 1 million have taken out payday loans. This will prove unsustainable for many, and lead to spiralling debt.

Family Action has found that some families are living off just £2 a day after paying housing and fuel bills. This is 21st century Britain, but is akin to Dickensian times, a sad indictment of the lack of real progress in one of the wealthiest nations in the world.

We are under attack from politicians, who disregard the needs of the people, to serve the interests of the corporate directors, wealthy landowners and bankers.

We need to rally in our communities and support each other in any way we can, rather than fall by the wayside, isolated and alone. Together, we can fight evictions, demand really affordable rents and call for more social housing.



Haringey Housing Action Group work collectively to solve each others' housing problems and campaign for better housing for all. Get in touch at housingaction@haringey.org.uk

DECENT, SECURE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL!

THE LOCALISM ACT... SMASHING COMMUNITIES

Politicians are selling the Localism Act as "giving power to local people". Bollocks. It actually makes vicious attacks on our lives - this time it's housing and homelessness.

At the moment, if you're homeless and in one of the groups councils have to help, you'll eventually get a permanent home. The Localism Act changes this. Now the only offer they have to give you can include dodgy private rented housing. Refuse this and councils can wash their hands of you. It's OK, say rich Tories, as the minimum tenancy is a year and there is talk (yep, just talk) of some minimum standards. Rubbish. The change will mean people moving again and again as landlords look for bigger and bigger profits.

Further, there is nothing stopping any council putting you anywhere in the UK. Haringey could put us miles away if they want. You can get a review if you think an offer is unsuitable. If you win you'll be offered another place - but will many succeed?

Once in another borough for two years, it's that council who are responsible for you if you become homeless again. Rich councils will put their homeless in places like Haringey where rents are lower. If people

become homeless again - it's Haringey's problem, not theirs. Rich councils are already offering Haringey landlords £1,000 'incentives' for their accommodation. The winners will be private landlords and rich councils, the losers - poorer councils and homeless people. Changes are also coming in over who councils can exclude from their waiting lists. We don't know yet if Haringey is planning any changes, but we need to keep our eye on the ball.

Another big change for council tenants is "fixed term tenancies" or "flexible tenancies". Instead of a secure council home, you could be given a minimum two year fixed term tenancy. If a council decides after the two years you don't need housing any more - bye, bye house. Presently this only affects new tenants, so if you already have a council house you should be OK.

To use flexible tenancies, councils have to have made something called "a housing strategy" (deadline January 2013). Haringey Council has said it won't bring in flexible tenancies because of cost and damage to communities. But we all know about Haringey Council's past promises. So we need to pressurise Haringey to write this into its housing strategy.

ST ANN'S SELL OFF

Over the years, hospital and other clinical services have evaporated from the St. Ann's hospital site. This has forced patients to travel considerable distances to access these services at other hospitals. Existing services are housed in increasingly decrepit buildings with outdated facilities.

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust (BEHMT), which is responsible for the site, now estimate that £25 million is required to modernise remaining services in new or refurbished and re-equipped buildings. One might have thought that the NHS, paid for by our taxes, would cover the cost of maintaining services. But the accounting practices of an NHS, subjected to the logic

of the private market, means that BEHMT must borrow money from the NHS and hope that competing GP Practices will pay for these services in order to repay the loan.

Local groups of carers, patients and others attended workshops late last year and suggested that health services should be expanded. They also felt any surplus land should be used for community purposes, green spaces and, possibly, social housing. But, as BEHMT must borrow money for redevelopment, how can it raise money without selling off part of the hospital grounds?

The great and good already have surplus hospital land earmarked for

development which, of course, means private development. NHS land, which should be a source of benefit to the community, will be sold off and lost to public use forever. The public consultation exercise over the redevelopment is ongoing. Concerned individuals can engage with local residents' or other community associations and Defend Haringey Health Services Association in order to fight for better health and housing services in our community.

For further information contact: Haringey Federation of Residents' Associations <http://hfra.wikispaces.com/> and Defend Haringey Health Services: <http://defendharingeyhealthservices.org.uk/>

HOUSING BENEFITS — THE FACTS.

For new claims or when current claims are reviewed Housing Benefit will now be capped at 30% of average rents in an area. It used to be 50%. Now, only 3 out of 10 rented properties are available to claimants

Under 35, and living alone
The maximum Housing Benefit you will now get is the "single room" rate (see below) no matter what property you live in. This used to only apply to under 25's.

If you have a high rent
There is a maximum Housing Benefit rate for each type of property. For most of Haringey the limits are:

- £87.50 for a single room
- £180 for one bedroom
- £230.77 for two
- £294 for three bedrooms
- £361.50 for four

Nationally the rates are capped at:

- £123.50 for a single room
- £250 for one bedroom

- £290 for two bedrooms
- £340 for three bedrooms
- £400 for four

If you have more than four bedrooms
You will only be able to claim up to the maximum for a four bedroom property.

Cheaper rents
It used to be you could keep £15 if your rent was below a certain amount. This has now stopped

Disabled people who need an extra room for a carer
You should get Housing Benefit to cover the cost, so long as you can show you need care, and have a carer.

You can apply for discretionary housing payments from the council if you have a shortfall in your rent.

LOCAL COMMUNITY CENTRE UNDER THREAT

The Welbourne Centre is a fantastic community centre in Tottenham Hale that provides services to children, young people and adults from the Caribbean and wider local communities. We provide a lunch club, keep fit, after school cooking club, domino club and room hire. The centre, run by the Caribbean Senior Citizens Association (CSCA), has been there for over 20 years.

We are under attack from Haringey Council, who have taken 3 elderly ex-trustees to court for rent arrears. This is an injustice. The CSCA paid £15k of the arrears in 6 months, on top of legal fees fighting the council. But Haringey Council refuse to negotiate, preferring to persecute three local residents who, in their role as trustees, ensured a

local service remained open and accessible.

We are shocked and disappointed with the council. Councillors fail to listen to reason, seem determined to close the centre and don't seem to care about the local community's needs.

We need your support to stop the court action and the closure of the Welbourne Centre.

Sign our on-line petition or drop into the Centre. Follow us on Twitter [@WelbourneC](https://twitter.com/WelbourneC), Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Welbourne-Centre/189076691196524>, or email welbournecentre@yahoo.co.uk

Any support is greatly appreciated.

TOTTENHAM DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

The parents of Mark Duggan recently complained to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), that the police had failed to inform them of his murder as is required by law.

On February 29th, the IPCC upheld the complaint as we all knew it would. However the IPCC went further by accepting that they could, and should, have done more to support the family themselves.

These words bring little comfort to Mark's grieving parents but they do completely vindicate the actions of those of us who were so outraged by the lack of dignity afforded to the family that we felt compelled to demonstrate outside Tottenham Police Station on August 7th.

The IPCC also had to apologise for the misinformation that they put out regarding a shootout, that we all now know didn't happen. So it's impossible not to come to the conclusion that had these organisations behaved in a professional and courteous fashion (i.e. performed their duties instead of spinning information and lying about fact) the scenes we witnessed across the UK last August would have never taken place. These institutions mess up but it's the community that pays the price!

TDC will be hosting several high profile events in the coming months to look at these issues and more, starting with a meeting at Queen Mary's College, Mile End Road entitled Recession, Racism and Riots. We will also be co-hosting a national conference with the Institute of Race Relations looking at 'Public Order Policing & Over Policed Communities' at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre on 19th & 20th June 2012.

We are also currently planning a number of events to take place on August 4th 2012, including the first 'Mark Duggan Memorial Lecture'.

SCRAP THE BILL! DEFEND THE NHS

Defend Haringey Health Services Coalition (DHHS) formed in January 2010 to defend Haringey's health services from being fragmented and dismantled. It organises leafleting, meetings and demos to fight cuts in health and social care funding. Some of the past successful campaigns that DHHS have been involved with were Save the Laurels Health Centre and Save Whittington A & E.

The Health and Social Care Bill is of course the major threat to the NHS at present. It will lead to fragmentation and paves the way for mass privatisation of health services. DHHS totally oppose it, as do the BMA and Royal College of Nursing.

The first main change for residents of Haringey will be that their local GP practices become "Clinical Commissioning Groups" (CCGs). These will be responsible for "buying" health services in their area. The likely effects will be that residents may not be able

to register at a CCG as they may be seen to be "too expensive" to care for, and the CCG will charge for "non-priority" services which are currently free - such as cataracts and joint replacements.

Other effects that are already happening include St Ann's Hospital deciding to move Mental Health wards to Chase Farm Hospital in Enfield, making relatives trek over there to visit. DHHS also oppose St Ann's plans to sell off NHS land to develop "For Profit" Housing. And if the Whittington Hospital becomes a Foundation Hospital it will be able to allocate 49% of its beds to private patients with the result that other patients from Haringey go to the back of the queue for treatment. So, say "Scrap This Bill. Defend Your NHS".

What you can do: Check the DHHS website for details of demonstrations and meetings www.defendharingeyhealthservices.org.uk/

EURO CRISIS? WHOSE CRISIS?

For almost a decade prior to the credit crunch of 2008, political elites acted as pimps for financial elites. They deregulated markets and allowed banks and other institutions to offer near-endless credit and dodgy mortgages based on hopelessly over-inflated property values. Corporate suits stuffed their pockets with ill-gotten gains, dreamt up ever more elaborate tax-avoidance schemes and, of course, didn't forget to line the pockets of their political chums.

When the bubble burst and those same institutions attempted to balance their crooked books, governments

cut by 25%. The minimum wage has been cut by 22%, youth unemployment stands at 50%, pension funds have been stripped to the bone, millions cannot pay for their fuel, homelessness and suicide are rapidly increasing and state services are handed over to the private sector for profit. Meanwhile, elected politicians who are deservedly despised for their dishonesty become puppets as international bankers are jetted in to take decisions further impoverishing the people.

This is austerity Euro-style but, as Paul Mason, BBC 2 Newsnight economist commented, when asked



stepped in with taxpayers' money. We bailed them out yet the million pound bonuses and multi-million pound share and pension deals continued. The ConDem coalition forces austerity on those least able to afford it in order to maintain their own bloated lifestyles and those of greedy corporate suits. The Euro crisis illustrates that the ConDems have barely scratched the surface.

The European Single Market and the Eurozone were the creation of political and financial elites seeking to further their profits and wealth. European Commissioners turned a blind eye to the fact that the economies of countries like Greece and Portugal were in no fit shape to enter a common currency zone dominated by wealthy countries like Germany.

In a desperate attempt to remain a part of this powerful, rich man's club, individual governments have turned viciously on their own people with devastating consequences, particularly in the case of Greece. Whilst wealthy Greeks ship their money out to offshore havens, average wages have been

about UK austerity at the end of last year, "We ain't seen nothing yet".

So where does this leave us? Are we simply going to submit to the inhuman demands of these dishonest political and financial elites? Events of the last 18 months suggest not. Millions of people have taken to the streets of the UK to defend their pensions and fight rising student tuition fees. As is shown elsewhere in this newspaper, ConDem policies of handing over health and education services to private companies and attempts to impose Workfare are running into trouble daily.

Far from succumbing to the demands of corrupt politicians and greedy bankers, we should take heart from successes in our local community and from those taking to the streets of Athens as they battle injustice.

As the rich force their crisis, a crisis of capitalism, upon us, we should seize every opportunity to take to the streets and make it clear that, having been ripped off in the past, we're not going to be ripped off again.